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MIDWINTER CONFERENCE

Tuesday, February 15 through Friday, February 18
COLONIAL HOTEL in HELENA

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 2005 COMMISSIONER CERTIFICATION Phase II

9:00 -12:00 noon Course 201
"Building the County Budget"

1:00-3:00 p.m. Course 202
"County Taxation"

3:30-4:30 p.m. Course 203
"Managing County Finances"

5:00-6:30 p.m. MACo/DES/DPHHS
No-Host Social Gathering

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 16 DISASTER & EMERGENCY SERVICES

8:00 – 9:00 a.m. Introduction Ceremony

9:00 –10:00 a.m. State of the State
Dan McGowan
DES Administrator

10:30 – 12:00 noon Panel Discussion
Interoperable Communications

12:00 noon – 1:30 Governor's Luncheon

1:30 – 2:30 p.m. Keynote Speaker
Michael Brown, Undersecretary, FEMA

3:00 – 5:00 p.m.
Leadership and Communication
Sally Johnson, DPHHS
Dick Brundage

5:00-7:00 p.m.
Commissioner Reception
Governor's Mansion

7:30 p.m. MACo Board of Directors
Dinner Meeting

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 2005 MACo and LEGISLATURE DAY

7:00-8:00 a.m. JPA Trustees Breakfast
7:00-8:00 a.m. Reservation Counties

8:30-11:00 a.m. General Session

11:00 a.m. Buses to the Capitol

11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m. Lunch with
Legislators in the Rotunda

1:00-3:00 p.m. House and Senate
Floor Sessions

3:00-5:00 p.m. Committee Hearings

5:00 p.m. Return to the Hotel

5:30 p.m. Urban Counties
5:30 p.m. Hard Rock Mining Counties
5:30 p.m. Oil, Gas and Coal Counties
5:30 p.m. Coalition of Forest Counties
5:30 p.m. Fort Peck Lake Group

6:00 p.m. JPIA/JPA Trustees Dinner

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 2005 NETWORKING WITH DEPARTMENTS 8:30 am

State Department Directors
Public Health & Services– Dr. Robert Wynia
Department of Revenue – Dan Bucks
Department of Administration – Janet Kelly
Governor's Budget Office – David Ewer
Department of Commerce – Anthony Priete
Environmental Quality – Richard Oppen
Natural Resources & Conservation–
Mary Sexton

LOSS CONTROL CONFERENCE

Over 100 county officials participated in a successful loss control conference in Lewistown, January 17-19. The workshops included a variety of topics, with two tracks focused on subjects for law enforcement and for road crew members.

During the general session, the participants heard an audio CD from Mike Schlappi, who was paralyzed at age 14 as a result of a shooting accident. After rehabilitation, he became the only US wheelchair basketball player to participate in four Paralympics. He has degrees in Finance, Business Administration and Health Care. His topic for the conference was "If You Can't Stand Up, Stand Out".

Fergus County citizen, Vern Petersen, spoke on the importance of having a safety program. He was presented with a plaque in appreciation for his many years of service on the MACo Insurance Boards of Trustees. The plaque featured poetry written by MACo staff member, Oline Barta.



Of nobility and honor,
the wise imposed a code
that lived with this Commissioner
while making better roads.

Smoothing paths for fellowmen,
he helped them get their bounty,
A diplomat in western clothes,
A statesman for the county.

In places far from his prairie home,
he went that extra mile.
This humble guy became well known
for integrity and style.

The open road now beckons him,
and the legacy he leaves
can inspire many other folks
to follow the tracks they see.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

February 8	Medicaid Planning; MACo Conf. Room
February 15-18	Midwinter Conference; Helena
February 15	Clerk of Courts; MACo Conf. Room; 4:00
February 16	Medicaid Planning; MACo Conf. Room
February 18	District Court Council; 8:00 am
February 23	Transmittal of non-fiscal / general bills

UPCOMING EVENTS

March 2-4	County School Superintendents Conf.
March 4-8	NACo Legislative Conference, Wash. DC
March 29-31	MACRS Convention; Billings
April 7	JPA Trustee Meeting
April 8	JPIA Trustee Meeting--Renewals

TRAVEL RATES CLARIFICATION

By Jack Hostrom, MACo Personnel Services

The articles appearing in the MACo newsletters regarding lodging reimbursement for in-state travel by county officers and employees has generated many inquiries.

Under Montana law, counties are not bound by the provisions of 2-18-501 MCA and may choose to reimburse employees and officers for overnight business lodging expenses in any manner they feel is appropriate. However, counties may have adopted travel policies modeled after the State rates.

If a county has adopted a travel policy which provides maximum amounts of reimbursement for overnight travel, in certain instances Montana law requires reimbursement for actual lodging expenses, even if the expense exceeds the level established in a county travel policy:
7-5-2142 MCA--actual transportation and per diem expenses for a clerk & recorder attending general meetings of the association of county clerk and recorders;

7-5-2143 MCA--actual transportation and per diem expenses for a clerk of court attending general meetings of the association of clerks of court;

7-5-2144 MCA--actual transportation and per diem expenses for a county treasurer attending general meetings of the association of treasurers;

7-5-2145(3) MCA--actual travel expenses for a county attorney, sheriff, assessor or justice of peace attending meetings / conventions of peers;

7-5-2145(2) MCA--actual transportation and per diem expenses for county commissioners attending a general meeting of county commissioners.

("Per diem" is defined as lodging, meals and incidental expenses)

HIGHWAY RECONFIGURATION STUDY CONCLUDES

an article from "Newslines", the newsletter from MDT Rail, Transit and Planning Division

Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) recently completed a groundbreaking study of the economic impact of highway expansion in Montana. With the guidance of a steering committee of business and government officials with expertise in economic development, the study produced a unique analysis tool that MDT will use to assess the economic impacts of proposed highway improvements.

The primary focus of the study was to examine the general issue of highway expansion and economic development in Montana. However, the study also gave MDT the opportunity to develop the Highway Economic Analysis Tool, or HEAT, which will enable MDT to comply with direction from the 2001 Legislature to include economic factors in its highway planning process. HEAT is the first economic analysis model in the US that highway planners can use to examine highway economic impacts at the statewide, corridor or project level.

To test HEAT, the Reconfiguration Study examined several HEAT test scenarios on representative Montana highway corridors such as Highway 93 between Evaro and Polson in Lake County, Highway 3 between Great Falls and Billings and Highway 2 from the Idaho border to the North Dakota border. The results of these test runs are documented in the Highway Reconfiguration Study final report, which is available at www.mdt.state.mt.us/research/docs/reconfig/final_report.pdf or by phoning Sue Sillick at 444-7693.

The groundbreaking importance of HEAT is evident in the amount of interest that transportation officials in other states have shown in adapting HEAT for use in their states. This interest should grow as MDT integrates HEAT into its Performance Programming Process (P³) and its analysis of proposed corridor improvement alternatives.

A consultant team led by Cambridge Systematics and

Economic Development Research Group conducted the study. Both firms have national and international expertise in the links between transportation and economic development. In addition to using data from national sources, the team interviewed Montana business and economic development leaders to ensure the study accurately reflected Montana economic conditions and perspectives.

WORKFORCE RE-TRAINING

Two emergency grants have been awarded to Montana from the US Department of Labor totaling \$846,744. The funds are to be used to provide re-training for laid-off workers from Talk America, Bresnan Communications and Stream International. The funding will aid 465 workers in Butte-Silver Bow, Cascade, Dawson, Flathead, Lake, Lewis & Clark and Missoula Counties.

IN MEMORIAM

Former MACo President and Sheridan County Commissioner Ray Stoner died in January. Stoner served as Commissioner for 24 years and was MACo President in 1974-75. He was 98 years of age and is survived by four generations of family.

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HOW TO ATTEND MEETINGS

sections from "Claw Your Way to the Top" by Dave Barry

It is helpful to know what work is involved with your job. There are two major kinds of work in modern organizations:

1. Taking phone messages for people who are in meetings; and
2. Going to meetings.

Your ultimate career strategy will be to get to a job involving No. 2 as soon as possible.

The very first meetings were held back in the Mezzanine Era. In those days, Man's job was to slay his prey and bring it home to Woman, who had to figure out how to cook it. However, Man was slow and basically naked, whereas the prey had warm fur and could run like an antelope. At last someone said, "Maybe if we sat down and did some brainstorming, we could come up with a better way to hunt our prey!" It went extremely well, plus it was much warmer sitting in a circle, so they agreed to meet again the next day, and the next. But the women pointed out that, prey-wise, the men had produced nothing, and the human race was pretty much starving. The men agreed that was serious and put it at the top of their "agenda." At that point the women, who were primitive but not stupid, started eating plants. And thus was modern agriculture born. It could never have happened without meetings.

The modern meeting could be compared with a funeral, although one major difference is that funerals have a definite purpose. Also, nothing is ever really buried in a meeting. If you have ever seen the movie *Night of the Living Dead*, you have a rough idea of how modern meetings operate, with projects and proposals that everybody thought were killed rising constantly from

their graves to stagger back into meetings.

These are the three kinds of meetings:

1. Meetings held for basically the same reason that Arbor Day is observed--namely, tradition:

For example, many managerial people like to meet on Monday, because it is Monday. This could account for 83% of all meetings held (based on a study in which I wrote down numbers until one of them looked about right). This type of meeting operates the way "Show and Tell" does in kindergarten, with everybody getting to say something--the difference being that in kindergarten, the kids actually have something *new* to say. When it's your turn, say you're still working on whatever it is you're supposed to be working on. Even if you aren't, you should *claim* you are, because this is the traditional thing to say.

2. Meetings with an alleged purpose: Sometimes somebody just wants to show slides of pie charts and give everybody a copy of a big fat report. All you have to do is sit there and have elaborate fantasies, then take the report back to your work space and put it on a shelf.

3. Meetings to get your "input" on something: This is very serious, because they want to make sure that if whatever it is turns out to be stupid or fatal, you'll get some of the blame. So you have to somehow escape from the meeting before they ask you anything. One way is to set fire to some part of your clothing.

You should know how to take notes at a meeting. Use a yellow legal pad. At the top, write the date and underline it TWICE. Then, when an important person starts talking, look at the person with an expression of enraptured interest, as though these words were the secrets of life itself. Then write interlocking rectangles or you can try joined circles or careful zigzags.

If somebody falls asleep in a meeting, ask everybody else to leave the room and then collect a group of total strangers, right off the street. Have them sit around the sleeping person until he wakes up. Then have one of them say, in a very somber voice, "Your plan is very, very risky. However you've given us no choice but to try it. I only hope for your sake, that you know what you're getting yourself into." Then they should file quietly from the room.

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TELLING THE COUNTY GOVERNMENT STORY

edited from South Dakota Association of County Commissioners "County Comment"

If past legislative sessions taught us anything, it was that too many citizens do not realize how many essential services are provided by county governments.

Many county officials currently write regular articles about their activities for their local newspapers and talk to their local service organizations about role of local governments. Some counties also provide a county budget letter which is sent out with tax notices. In areas where this public education effort is consistent, it appears that there is less conflict and more positive citizen participation.

The following are some talking points which might assist in this public relations effort.

County governments are the quiet, consistent providers of essential services which are often taken for granted and go unnoticed until these services are reduced or eliminated. It is remarkable how many citizens do not know what counties do.

- Counties collect all of your property taxes, invest them, and distribute them to schools, cities, towns, and every special district.
- Counties maintain all of your land records and property transactions. They record vital statistics such as births, deaths and marriages.
- Counties license your motor vehicles and boats.
- Counties take out your garbage and bury it. Some counties provide recycling services.
- Counties build, maintain and plow your roads and bridges.
- Counties immunize your children and provide home health care for senior citizens and those at risk. They provide nursing homes for the aged and health care clinics for the needy.
- Counties inspect your restaurants so you don't get sick when you go out to eat, and they inspect septic systems so your neighbor does not contaminate your drinking water.
- Counties contribute to your libraries and senior citizen centers. They provide transportation assistance to senior citizens and the handicapped.
- They provide financial assistance to impoverished families with children, and job training programs to help them become self-sufficient again.
- Counties provide law enforcement and a justice court system. They call juries and provide for the defense of the indigent. They prosecute all felonies, and when criminals are found guilty, they provide county detention centers to keep them off the streets.
- Counties provide emergency dispatch services for fire, law enforcement and ambulances. They provide search and rescue operations when people are lost or in danger.
- Many counties provide ambulance services when a private provider is not available.
- Counties provide shelter care for juveniles who are in trouble and mental health services for the mentally ill.
- Counties provide fairgrounds, parks and recreation sites.
- Counties provide weed control, animal control and mosquito control.
- Counties provide fire protection and preparation / response to disasters such as fires, floods and earthquakes.
- Counties provide land use planning, and extension services such as 4-H and agricultural assistance.
- Counties sponsor economic development loans to expand the economy.

Remind citizens and legislators alike of these services. Then show them what a small proportion of their property taxes goes to fund them. This positive approach will provide you with more support for your efforts to deliver efficient, responsive services.

U OF M RURAL HEALTH SCREENING PROGRAM

Improving Health Among Rural Montanans (IPHARM) is a University of Montana program designed to provide health screenings for rural residents while at the same time serving as a real-world classroom for students, faculty and health care professionals. The UM Pharmacy school operates and drives an ambulatory clinic to rural areas of the state and, for a nominal fee, screens residents.

"If Montana's population projections hold, access to medical care for elderly residents in rural areas will become a pressing issue," said Gayle H. Cochran, UM pharmacy professor and administrator for Montana Geriatric Education Center

The Montana Geriatric Education Center (MTGEC), was created in July 2002 through a five year grant from the Department of Health and Human Services Health Resources and Services Administration. The grant is to facilitate the training of health professions faculty, students, and practitioners in the diagnosis, treatment, prevention of disease, disability, and other health problems of the elderly.

The MTGEC-IPHARM grant focuses on educating and training health profession students, faculty, and rural health professionals in the provision of wellness testing. MTGEC provides the educational modules while IPHARM provides a platform for hands-on training of those students and profession-

als who have completed the modules. The ultimate goal of the project is to improve health outcomes for rural Montanans.

IPHARM offers four basic wellness tests for bone density, cholesterol, diabetes and respiratory function. Donna Beall, Pharm.D., the project's Principal Investigator indicates, "The four tests were chosen because they test for health issues that may be easily overlooked." Furthermore, she explained, the tests were chosen because they meet criteria specified by the "Healthy People 2010" program.

After purchasing wellness testing equipment and hiring staff, IPHARM began services in February 2003. During 2004, the program performed over 3,500 disease assessment tests on more than 2,000 citizens. The program not only makes it easier for rural residents to get improved health services, but it can also help find diseases before they become life threatening and expensive to treat. "When access to testing is a problem, people are less likely to get tested," said Beall. Results usually are available within ten minutes of the tests.

HOW TO SPONSOR AN IPHARM EVENT

Sponsors look within their community to assure that IPHARM is not competing with a local provider. IPHARM will work with a partner in bigger communities, provided the part-

ner is a local retail pharmacy and IPHARM charges a fee for testing similar to local competitors. However, IPHARM will not refuse testing to an individual unable to pay for such tests in any geographic area.

1. Contact the local health department to determine if such testing is available by other means in the community and if so, at what fees.
2. Contact IPHARM to determine whether an IPHARM visit is appropriate. Have at least two possible dates to suggest.

IPHARM Contact:

Bob Williams, IPHARM Project Coordinator (406) 682-4109 or annwill@3rivers.net.

Completed 2004 Locations

Big Timber	Bozeman
Butte	Chinook
Cut Bank	Denton
Ennis	Florence
Frenchtown	Great Falls
Libby	Livingston
Missoula	Three Forks
White Sulfur Springs	
Whitefish	Wilsall



Serving a client at Madison County's Ennis Fire Hall during an event last March

COUNTY NEWS

COUNTY ATTORNEY PAY

VALLEY COUNTY Attorney should be paid the balance of the state's share of his salary by the County, a District Court ruled. *(In October 2003, with 30 counties reporting, 17 counties do make up the difference between what the state is willing to pay and the negotiated annual increase. Twelve counties do not pay the difference, but pay the same amount as the state is willing to pay.)*

COMBINING OFFICES

CASCADE COUNTY proposes to combine weed control, mosquito control and solid waste management with the road and bridge department, all under a public works department.

JEFFERSON COUNTY created a new position by combining part-time work from the weed department, economic development and the extension service.

PONDERA COUNTY received a \$25,000 traffic safety problem identification grant to focus on vehicle occupant protection and impaired driving prevention. The County will join with **TETON and TOOLE COUNTIES** to implement the education program.

CARTER, CUSTER, DAWSON, FALLON GARFIELD, McCONE, POWDER RIVER, PRAIRIE, RICHLAND and WIBAUx COUNTIES have formed a consortium to hire an engineer to place towers for an interoperable communication system.

HILL COUNTY and City of Havre law enforcement offices have proposed consolidating city and county dispatch. Also being discussed is the location of the new enhanced 911 dispatch service.

SOLID WASTE

POWELL COUNTY is considering fencing around transfer stations in Ovando and Helmville to keep out bears, if funding would come from sources other than local taxpayers.

PARK COUNTY Refuse Board and the City of Livingston requested that the County Commission authorize a financial and operational audit of the county's solid waste system.

POWDER RIVER COUNTY must decide on closing the existing Class II landfill and haul the waste or open a new cell, which would require a DEQ application and site engineering. A recycling program to save landfill space is also being considered.

COURTS

MISSOULA COUNTY Public Defender Office stopped accepting new cases in August. Judges have been assigning new cases to private attorneys.

GALLATIN COUNTY added five new positions to the court system. The original plan was to have a weekend court instituted for the second half of the fiscal year. However, the increased number of felony cases established a need for the positions, whether or not a weekend court was established.

FALLON COUNTY Justice Court is considering a Community Service Program. Discussion centers around whether the new director should be a new county employee or a contractor.

TAXES / TAX INCENTIVES

JEFFERSON COUNTY will receive \$21,000 in heavy equipment personal property taxes paid by major mining companies for FY 04. In 1999, the County received \$270,000 from those taxes before the tax reductions were in effect.

YELLOWSTONE COUNTY's two commercial tax reduction programs to stimulate economic development have had 20 companies participate since 1999.

OIL and MINING

VALLEY COUNTY is hiring a part-time employee to research mineral rights and identify productive gas wells, in an effort to verify that the county is or is not receiving royalties on them.

STILLWATER and SWEET GRASS COUNTIES are disputing gross proceeds tax revenues from the Hard Rock Mining Act, to determine how funds should go to the county with the mine underground within its boundaries and to the county where the mining originates.

PUBLIC RELATIONS

YELLOWSTONE COUNTY Commissioner and MACo President Bill Kennedy was named "Public Official of the Year" by the Laurel Chamber of Commerce and Jaycees.

LEWIS and CLARK COUNTY Commission began a series of "Coffee with the Commissioners" at 7:30 am on given Wednesdays.

JEFFERSON COUNTY employees received bonuses up to \$500 each at the end of 2004. Each bonus was prorated for the percentage of the year worked.

MONTANA VEHICLE TEMPORARY REGISTRATION PERMITS

by Anne Wolfinger, Communications Officer
Motor Vehicle Division, Department of Justice

Montana drivers will see some big changes in vehicle temporary registration permits (TRPs). The Montana Department of Justice Motor Vehicle Division (MVD), through a partnership with Montana Interactive, LLC, is changing the vehicle permitting processes to make it easier and more convenient for Montana residents to acquire temporary registration permits for newly purchased vehicles.

Temporary registration permits, or TRPs, are the forms that owners have traditionally placed in a vehicle's back window until they get their regular license plates. Montana state law requires owners to properly register and license vehicles before driving them on public roads or highways. Vehicle owners receive a temporary registration permit when they purchase a vehicle, select a type of plate that is not in stock, or for several other reasons. This permit allows someone to legally drive a vehicle before the owner receives the new registration and plates from the MVD or one of its agents.

The new permits are distinctive. The eight-character alphanumeric format is in large print for better readability and the expiration date is clearly printed on the permit. **Vehicle owners will no longer place the new permits in the vehicle's back window. Instead, they will put the top half of the permit into a plastic sleeve and attach it where the vehicle's rear license plate normally goes.**

In addition to these new physical features, law

enforcement and county treasurer personnel will be able to access TRP information for the first time. The new permits will be searchable through the Criminal Justice Information Network (CJIN) System in all 50 states, just as regular license plates are.

Temporary registration permits are now available from only three sources, each with a different permit format:

- **Vehicle dealers** – If an individual purchases a vehicle from a dealer, the dealer usually takes care of the permit. Dealers have to purchase and stock the permit forms at a cost of about 10 cents each.
- **County treasurers and law enforcement agencies** – When a buyer purchases a vehicle through a private party sale, the permit can be obtained from either the county treasurer's office in the buyer's county of residence or from a law enforcement agency.

In the future, there will be one version of the TRP format and it will be available from the selling vehicle dealer, participating financial institutions, all county treasurer offices, and over the Internet.

In March, five dealers will try the new process in a pilot project. They are Grimes Buick GMC, Inc., Placer Motors, Inc., and Kev's Auto Sales in Helena; Taylor's Automax in Great Falls; and Archie Cochrane Motors, Inc. in Billings. Plans call for the new TRP process to be used by dealers statewide in late fall of 2005.

TEAM 261 is developing the project under direction of the Montana Department of Justice. TEAM 261 is an ambitious information technology project changing the systems behind the driver licensing, vehicle titling, and vehicle registration processes. For the TRP project, TEAM 261 is working in cooperation with Montana Interactive, LLC, a division of NIC (NASDAQ: EGOV), the world's largest provider of e-government services.

RECYCLING IN MONTANA PART 2 OF 3

NOTE: Data was compiled by intern, Matt Elsaesser, who graduated from Carroll College and wrote his thesis on recycling. The report was written by Jeff Blend, Economist, Department of Environmental Quality.

The Recycling Industry in Montana is significant. In 2003, the industry paid over \$9 Million in wages and benefits to over 300 full-time and 40 part-time employees. The average wage per full-time job (including benefits) was about \$29,028 a year, which is several thousand dollars greater than the average wage in Montana (about \$25,800 in 2002 according to the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis). Total gross revenues for the industry in 2003 were almost \$90 Million. These totals include all facets of recycling activity such as collection, remanufacturing and sales. The totals include the private sector, public sector and not-for-profit entities.

The largest component of recycling is the for-profit private sector, which is the traditional backbone for recycling in Montana. Manufacturing was the largest recycling activity in Montana and the processing of recycled materials was the second largest activity. The total economic numbers below were largely concentrated within several individual businesses.

Total avoided landfill costs in 2002 as a result of recycling were estimated to be \$4,615,776—128,216 tons recycled which avoided landfill at a fee of \$36.00 per ton.
(Brian Spangler, Montana DEQ).

There are also indirect positive economic effects from recycling and tax revenues collected from the recycling industry in Montana. Estimating these numbers is beyond the scope of this paper.

The amount of total waste generated in Montana in 2002 was 1,194,243 tons. The amount of waste put into landfills was 1,004,635 tons or about 84% of total waste and the amount incinerated was 13,037 tons or about 1% of total waste. The total amount of waste that was recycled was 128,216 tons or 11% of the total gener-

ated. Four percent or 48,355 tons were composted. So, about 15% of Montana's total waste was either recycled or composted.

The 128,216 tons recycled was reported from 12 different companies/public facilities in Montana with Pacific Steel being the largest recycler overall. Eight companies comprised the 48,355 tons of composted material (Montana DEQ, Air, Energy, and Pollution Prevention Bureau).

In 2002, numbers were estimated for total tonnage of recycled materials in Montana. The tonnage numbers were collected from landfills and transfer reports submitted to the Solid Waste Department at DEQ. These numbers were obtained from landfills, transfer facilities and recyclers through an annual survey. Montana DEQ went through the reports to gather and summarize the information. Individual names and towns are not reported due to confidentiality concerns.

In 2002, there was a total of 128,216 tons of total recycled material in Montana. The estimated numbers for the tonnage recycled of specific major materials are:

Cardboard -----	77,642 tons
Paper -----	27,167 tons
Aluminum -----	21,977 tons
Steel -----	1,428 tons
Plastic -----	172 tons

Total..... 128,216 tons

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and
Emelia McEwen

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WHITE HOUSE TO REVIEW SWEEPING EPA GROUNDWATER PROPOSALS

Submitted by Peggy Beltrone, Cascade County Commissioner

A major U.S. EPA proposal that would require states to create comprehensive programs for monitoring groundwater -- the nation's largest single source of drinking water -- has been sent to the White House for review.

The proposed rule would raise regulatory stakes for states and drinking water suppliers. Some states draw the vast majority of their drinking water from below ground. Montana, for one, gets 94 percent of its water from wells and Nebraska roughly 85 percent. EPA estimates that 157,000 drinking water systems could be subject to the rule.

EPA officials expect the White House to complete its review within 90 days, (end of March) which is typical for executive branch scrutiny of pending rules. (To read the proposed rule go to <http://www.epa.gov/safewater/gwr/gwrprop.pdf>)

The new EPA rule would require states to create programs to prevent groundwater contamination from E. coli and enterococci bacteria and

coliphage viruses, said Michael Finn, an EPA official who is working on the rule.

EPA is unlikely to require states set up testing programs for each pathogen flagged in the proposal, Finn said. Consequently, drinking water industry officials said that means most state regulators are likely to test for E. Coli, because but by most accounts, there are fewer standardized test methods for enterococci and coliphage.

EPA has been working on the rule since 1990, largely because it has been slowed by states' concerns that the new groundwater programs mandated by EPA will be expensive to launch.

Water suppliers will be forced to provide states with much of the groundwater data they need to implement the rule, industry officials said. The American Water Works Association and the Association of Metropolitan Water Agencies, called on EPA to conduct year-long monitoring of groundwater to define the scope of bacterial contamination before moving

ahead with expensive preventive measures.

The rule would require states to consider a variety of factors before deciding which groundwater-based drinking water systems they should test. For example, they would have to consider whether aquifers are likely to be contaminated because of soil type or how close groundwater is to the surface.

Mike Keegan of the National Rural Water Association said groundwater in states like Nebraska is cleaner than that in other regions because it relies on deep wells that naturally filter out many contaminants. States with sandy soils and shallow aquifers may face a higher threat of contamination, Keegan added.

"States generally tend to do what EPA tells them to do; they don't ask why," Keegan said. "Our concern is that EPA's going to drive this process into making people do a lot of things that aren't necessary just to have uniformity across the program."

EPA estimated that it would raise drinking water rates by less than \$5 per year for 90 percent of the U.S. households served by groundwater. Although EPA may change the rule's economic analysis before it issues the regulation, EPA officials said the rule will still be affordable for drinking water ratepayers.

Keegan said EPA costs assessments for drinking water rules often "lack credibility."

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CONTACT

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NACo INFORMATION



NACo COUNTY SERVICES DEPARTMENT

NACo's County Services Department is the largest and most diverse department at NACo. From economic development and civic participation to environmental quality and housing, the Department has the training and expertise to support county needs. The wide range of resources include technical assistance, best-practice guides, research support, peer-to-peer contacts, training seminars, conferences and program development.

The Department has three divisions, two service offices, and one center:

Divisions: Community Services
Conferences

Services: Research
Education
Affiliates

Center: Sustainable Communities

COMMUNITY SERVICES DIVISION

The Division provides technical assistance to counties on a wide range of issues by providing information to improve local services. Technical assistance varies by project, but is often presented in workshops, publications, articles, website, awards, grants and/or peer-to-peer referencing. Specific projects offer technical help in energy efficiency, building restoration, indoor air quality, transportation planning, water management, health or housing services.

CONFERENCES DIVISION

NACo holds four conferences annually. These conferences and events afford members the opportunity to learn and gather information to help improve the effectiveness of their counties. The cornerstone of the four NACo conferences is the Annual Conference held in July. This conference draws some 4,000 officials annually and is held in a different county each year. The three other conferences are the Legislative Conference (February or March), the Health, Human Services and Workforce Conference (November), and the Western Interstate Regional Conference (May).

RESEARCH DIVISION

This Division provides information and research to support county government administration. The Division conducts annual surveys of county governments, writes research briefs, maintains model county program information, sponsors three awards and one scholarship and serves as a clearinghouse for the collected data.

EDUCATION SERVICES

Training programs that further the knowledge, skills and professionalism of county officials include Leadership Training (courses offered at conferences) and the NACo Internet University--hundreds of Internet-based courses for county government personnel.

AFFILIATE SERVICES and SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES CENTER

Services to Affiliates provides services, information and links between NACo and 23 county affiliate organizations.

The Center is a collaborative effort between NACo and the US Conference of Mayors to provide a forum for cities and counties to develop long-term policies and programs for three areas--economic enhancement, environmental stewardship and social well-being.



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Strengthening Rural Families Workshop

Clark County, NV

By Doug Kaercher, Hill County Commissioner

In November I attended a workshop on Strengthening Rural Families, sponsored by NACo and the Annie E. Casey Foundation. I was struck by the fact that next to Hill County, the smallest county in attendance was Deschutes County, Oregon, with the fastest growing population in Oregon of 130,000 people. I began to wonder if these counties were rural, what are we?

During this workshop I realized that all across this country, family needs are very similar. Rural families are working hard but not getting ahead, with 20% of rural children living in poverty and 27% living in working poor families. The obstacles encountered are limited

opportunities and the absence of appropriate support.

Every county represented has assets to present which helped families in need. I believe that what we lack was the ability to sustain families, once we helped them up. Which brings me to a quote from the Casey foundation: "Children do well when their families do well; and families do better when they live in supportive communities." In other words families matter, place matters and connections count.

We as counties need to establish these connections by building on what we have--the families that are already in our communities.

WORLD POPULATION

If we could shrink the earth's population to a village of precisely 100 people, with all the existing human ratios remaining the same, it would look like this:

57 Asians

21 Europeans

14 North and South Americans

8 Africans

80 would live in sub-standard housing.

70 would be unable to read.

70 would be non-Christian.

70 would be non-white.

6 would have 59% of the wealth.

52 would be female.

50 would be malnourished.

1 would be college educated.

1 would own a computer.

MACo News

Phone (406) 444-4380

Fax (406) 442-5238

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